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Has Peaks Island Changed?

The following is an open letter to Peaks Island that was written 20 years ago.

The old road around the undeveloped half of Peaks Island was recently resurfaced; now it is the smoothest road on the island and cars can travel at moderate speeds without dust and jolts. The road is convenient and neat but it violates the spirit of that area and it makes me wonder how many people will eventually consent to cranking up all that static acreage and making it "useful.”

There are swamps and dusty roads and an abandoned military reservation on the back shore and they just sit there; they aren't glamorous but they contribute significantly to the character of Peaks Island and it's unique appeal. Around those swamps and roads there is an unobstructed view of the Atlantic, and a tremendous variety of trees and wildflowers. There are unusual birds, occasionally a deer, and you can pick enough wild fruit in ten minutes for your grandmother to bake a pie. Despite the fact that they don't do anything, these old bunkers are eagerly shown to friends and relatives who come to visit and they're great places in which to walk and explore. There is continued on page 5

Torrington Point Sewer Extension

At 7:30 p.m. on May 11, 1993, at St Christopher’s Hall, the PINA Public Works Committee sponsored an informational meeting so that representatives from the City (Bill Goodwin and George Flaherty) and the Water District (Jay Hewitt) could present facts and answer questions about the proposed Torrington Point sewer extension. Approximately 35 Islanders attended. Following are some questions and answers gleaned from the session. continued on page 2

Sustaining A Small Island In Maine

Golden finches return to the rosehip thickets on the backshore and tracks of a young buck initial the mud along an island trail you call your own. Such miracles, so close, so fragile give cause to wonder just how much longer will such special glimpses of nature remain on Peaks Island. Asked another way, the question is essentially one increasingly pondered by many Americans, Mainer's, and perhaps Peaks Islanders as well, "How do we sustain what is best and necessary of our natural resources for future generations?"

Clearly we are at a crossroads. Practically speaking, will we allow, by our priorities and actions (or inactions), our environment to continue to deteriorate perhaps beyond the limits of reparability, or will we take steps to sustain it for future generations?

Locally, will Peaks Islanders accept car fumes and discarded beer cans along whaleback as our way of life, or will we ensure that our days are fragranced by the glorious lilacs of the Bay, respect for the natural environment, and dignity for whaleback, our nature trails and the streets which paint our island. continued on page 4

July/August 1993
Peaks Island Opinion...

A place where we can agree to disagree: this is the intellectually open environment we value in our community, and hope to nourish in this forum. Two heads are better than one: This project is a collaborative effort of Jenny Yasi, Kathy Caron, Kim Norton, our writers, cartoonists and illustrators. We depend upon sponsors for funding. As the paper grows in size and number of copies, we especially thank you for making this forum financially possible.

Contributer Guidelines: All articles are published un-edited; please be concise. Authors write their own heading and subheadings. Cartoonists should use black ink, not pencil. We welcome Poetry, Recipes, Helpful Hints etc., for our Island Home Page.

Deadlines: By the first of each month please send material or hand deliver to Jenny at 7 Central Ave. Ext, Kathy at P.O. Box 1, or Kim at 21 Island Ave. Submissions must be signed; please include your phone number.

Sponsorship: $15 per issue.

Upcoming themes:
August/September, Taxes, Services and the Cost of Island Life. September/October, Life on Peaks Island in the year 2000 [Visions of the Future]. October/November, Transportation: Ferries, cars, bikes, etc. These suggestions are intentionally broad, to inspire, not limit your writing and cartoons. We're happy to accept material on any topic. The Peaks Island Opinion is a monthly publication of , by, and for the people of Peaks Island.

Torrington Point Sewer Extension

continued from page 1
Q. Who would be involved in the extension?
A. That is not yet known. Woodard and Curran has been contracted by the City to do a preliminary engineering study to determine the area to be served, and to come up with the most cost-effective plan. Hopefully, the report will be ready in a month or so and more definite information can be given to Islanders.
Q. How many more users could the treatment plant serve?
A. When it goes on line, it will serve about 200; it could easily serve twice that number.
Q. Where would the money come from to do this project?
A. There is federal money “parked” for this project right now which would cover 45% of the cost; the rest would be locally funded. It is hoped that public support for this project can be shown so that it can move forward. If the project stalls due to lack of support, the federal money may be lost, as early as this fall.
Q. How much would it cost me the user?
A. There is a basic hook-in fee (charged to sewer customers, city-wide) of $2,000. Plus contractor costs: $500 to $1,000 depending on distance and difficulty involved in doing the actual hook-up from the house to the sewer line. Plus the yearly average city-wide sewer user rate: about $250 based on water consumption. The yearly cost for summer users would probably not be that much, but there is a minimum.
Q. What if I can’t afford to hook up?
A. Because Peaks Island is currently eligible for HCD funds, loan and grant programs can be worked out with HCD funds for fixed and low-income families. The City Finance Director will work with individuals on this.
Q. Will I be forced to connect if the sewer goes by my house?
A. Technically, if you are within 200' of the sewer line, you must hook in within a year. But in practice, as long as your present system is functioning, you won't be forced to connect. You will, however, pay sewer availability charges. Once your current system malfunctions, you must fix/replace it, or hook in. It’s usually cheaper to go on the sewer.
Q. Why does Torrington Point need this?
A. This area is highly built with houses in very close proximity. Many have old cesspools and a few, in the Sandy Beach area, have direct overhead discharge pipes. Some of the latter homeowners have already petitioned the City for the sewer extension as they have no land for alternative systems. It is in the public interest to clean up the beach. The DEP will soon begin enforcing a stop on all overhead discharges. Also, the Estuary Project, which is studying water quality in Casco Bay, will eventually look at septage management as one way of curbing water pollution. People will be forced to comply with environmental regulations.
Q. Why not just do sub-surface waste disposal for much less cost? Couldn’t the City do soils analysis for homes in the area?
A. The City can’t fund a soils analysis on private property unless a complaint has been filed regarding a failing system. There are many Torrington Point areas with no space for a sub-surface system. Studies have been done and experts have concluded that the south end of the Island is in need of municipal sewerage.
Q. How does the decision get made to GO on this?
A. The approval is needed of at least 50% of the property owners projected to be served by the sewer extension.
When the engineering study is completed, notices of another informational meeting will be circulated. WATCH FOR THEM

Kay Taylor.

Up for Re-election

Five Board members of the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association will be up for re-election at the next meeting (scheduled for August 17th). John Carroll will be running for re-election as President of the nine-member board. John also sits on the Planning Board for the City of Portland, the Casco Bay Transit District, and is firmly opposed to a referendum vote on the Town of Peaks Island issue.

Others running for re-election are Marjorie Fife and Norm Proulx, both in favor of the “Right to Vote”. The terms of Faye Garman and Delores Lamai have expired; it is uncertain at this point whether they will seek re-election.

Nominations for positions on the Board are taken from the floor; consider becoming involved in P.I.N.A. now. P.I.N.A. should be directed to achieve a broad form of leadership, with room for lots of questions and answers. Let’s make this a full house event.

Jenni Yasi
The Unmarked Path

When I first moved to Peaks Island, I remember how excited I was about exploring my new island universe. Everyday I would venture off on my bicycle seeking another new, winding dirt roadway to discover and claim as my own. And, after I had found every single narrow, twisting roadway and identified it by name (this was long before street signs were even a thought in anyone's mind), I started leaving my bicycle at home and taking off on foot.

For every dirt road on Peaks Island, there must be at least a dozen or so footpaths. Of course, there is the obvious Snake Alley and the ever elusive Indian Trail. But, oh the joy of discovering for the very first time some new, barely discernible, but definitely-there path. There's always the fear of losing one's way...just how long could you walk in a circle in the reservation woods and never hit upon one of those dirt roads? Or the feeling of disappointment when your new discovery turns out to be just another branch of Indian Trail...or horrors, that it actually ends up at someone's doorway.

But nothing compares to the delicious feeling of satisfaction when the overgrown, barely-there footpath leads to a hidden, unknown treasure...a secret raspberry patch, an unknown high bush blueberry, a tiny, murky stream...made all the more special by the thought that only a few, if any other islanders, have passed this way before.

Recently, I started noticing pieces of red tin pounded into trees with roofing nails. First, they began to appear along the many island pathways, then, they began sprouting along many of the dirt roads. I imagined a mysterious, hooded gnome with a surplus of tin cans and a scarlett paint brush roaming the pathways and byways of the island, seeking new trails to mark with his scarlett tins.

Later, I began finding trees with six or seven roofing nails pounded into them, minus their red markers. Could it be we have a counter revolution-ary, I thought, ripping off the tins, only to be followed by the mysterious gnome who feverishly replaces his missing handywork?

Let's call a cease fire here. It's my opinion that we should let nature and individual discoverers roam the island freely once again. Let's leave a few unmarked paths for future generations to discover on their own. 

Kathy Caron

Opportunity to Act

Individuals can complain to any level of government in America, but to actually get things done they must operate within the system.

The governing system is conducted on many levels. Each functions to promote the welfare of the whole and of the separate. This progression begins within the family; it answers to the local rules of custom and propriety. The city rules are next, then the state and then federal. The ultimate holder of power is the moral code, which is arrived at by consensus and influences all levels. All powers not specifically held at the federal level are granted to the states. It follows then that powers not held by federal or state are the responsibility of the city.

We on Peaks Island have a governing body. It holds such power not specific to city, state, or federal levels. It is the Peaks Island Neighborhood Association. Our constitution is available to read at the Peaks Island library. This organization is recognized by our City of Portland as the official voice of Peaks Island. Please become involved. We meet regularly and our decisions influence the lifestyle here on Peaks.

The next general meeting includes the election of board members. Please come August 17, 7:30 P.M., the Community Building, unless an alternate location is posted. Membership is open to all concerned citizens on Peaks Island.

Julie Cherubini

"Such a nice place to raise a family!"
The Bill for a Special Island Tax District was put on hold and will not be voted on until next year's legislative session. Claire F'illiettaz is trying to find out why the vote was delayed.

There is a petition being circulated requesting that CBITD keep the 10:15 p.m. boat to Peaks Island on a year round basis. Contact Carol Eisenberg for information.

Congratulations to Ann and John Whitman for their winning effort at the annual Long Island dinghy rowing contest. That fluorescent trophy is quite impressive!

And congratulations to the people of Long Island for their winning effort to become an independent town. Good Luck and Best Wishes.

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**Sustaining A Small Island In Maine**

*A Spreader of the Peacock Movement*

July/August 1993

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**News Bites**

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- There is a petition being circulated requesting that CBITD keep the 10:15 p.m. boat to Peaks Island on a year round basis. Contact Carol Eisenberg for information.
- Claire F'illiettaz is trying to find out why the vote was delayed.
- An act to separate Peaks Island and certain other islands in Casco Bay from the city of Portland.

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**ICEBERG SPOTTED IN CASCO BAY**

L.D. # 1448:
An act to separate Peaks Island and certain other islands in Casco Bay from the city of Portland.

"THE TRUTH IS THAT THIS IS AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE THE UNIQUE COMMUNITY THAT PEAKS ISLAND HAS ALWAYS BEEN."
PEAKS ISLAND STAR MARCH 1992

TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PRESERVATION THE FOLLOWING CHANGES MUST OCCUR:

- Replacement of the Public Works Department.
- Replacement of the Public Safety Department.
- Replacement of the Emergency Fireboat Evacuation Service.
- Creation of a new library system.
- Establishment and staffing of new K-5 school system.
- Establishment of a new school system for grades 6-12.
- Establish a new town government.

RESULTING IN:
- No more backup equipment for public works, fire trucks and ambulance; No economics of bulk purchasing; Pick up $20,000 operating expense of Sewer Collector System; Lose triple trained public safety officers (now 2 men 24 hour coverage); No longer part of Portland Public Library System (2000 users service would change); Proven all-weather fire boat on paycall basis; Students would be part of the two district system; New teachers; Uncertainty of 120 students futures; Disenfranchisement of all registered voters who no longer can vote or run for school board in 6-12 grades; Loss of H.C.D. funds made available through Portland as an entitlement city (avg. $91,000/yr. over.12 years); Must now compete with other 480 towns in Maine; Water rates would increase at least 41%; Sewer system owners would be expected to pay for new sewers; 18,000 City of Portland sewer users would subsidize P.I. system; 16,242 town water users must pick up costs of Biod's system; Responsible for CBITD Capital matching funds (est. $200,000); 64,000 city tax payers must pick up $965,626 in tax shift; Lose priority access to Barron Center;

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**Bushberry**

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Stephen Schuit

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Gerry Garman

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Has Peaks Island Changed?

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space on the back shore and we need space. We need "Whale Back" rock and Battery Steele just as they are, for parties and cook-outs, and at times, to be alone. It takes no special knowledge to appreciate Peaks Island; it takes intuition, feelings for solitude, a leisurely sail, the sudden flight of a heron, or the smell of wild roses.

I've often heard people say, "You know, in a few years, the population here will double and it will be crowded, just like all the other places." Statements like this often anticipate self-fulfilling prophecy. Having envisioned a hypothetical crush, you then build the facilities to support it, and sure enough, it arrives. In a natural model, available living space has always determined population density and not the other way around.

I don't categorically resent changes; I'm sure the land back there can support some residential development without losing its identity. I just don't want the back shore to become East Main Street, or worse, downtown. The magic left those places long ago. I don't see that asphalt, neon and a liquor license for an old bunker can enhance what Peaks Island offers now.

I'm not trying to stir anyone up and I'm not exhorting anyone to lie in front of a bulldozer. If the residents of Peaks want abundant development, then the romantically must accept that decision with disappointment. I just don't want Peaks Island to be appreciated only in retrospect, by a group of people who through ignorance or aqiescence have let her slip away. I don't want to stand on the back shore by a new store, and hear people with regret in their voices say, "Gee, how quickly things change."

Dick Baker

(Excerpted with permission from his Field Guide to Birds and Wildflowers of Casco Bay and Peaks Island, published in 1974. The author, Bob B's brother, has summered here since 1959.)

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Peaks Island

Recipes

Fish Plenty Good

2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
1/4 cup dry bread crumbs
1 pound fish fillets (haddock, cod, or cusk)
1 teaspoon dried oregano leaves
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
1/2 cup fresh parsley and fresh cilantro, mixed to taste
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1/4 cup dry bread crumbs.

Pour 2 tablespoons oil evenly into baking dish. Rinse fish and coat with bread crumbs. Arrange fish in single layer in baking dish; sprinkle with the oregano. Pour lemon juice over fish.

Mix tomato sauce, parsley /cilantro mix, garlic, and the pepper; spoon over fish. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup bread crumbs.

Cook uncovered in 350 degree oven until fish flakes easily with a fork for, 30 to 40 minutes.

Calendar and Bulletin Board: $3.00 for up to 20 words. Bulletin Board includes things like rideshare, swap and barter, for sale, calendar. Sponsors contribute $15.00 (or more) for the issue in which their panel appears. Thank you for your support.

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